



# MOBILE PHONE AND PERSONAL DEVICE POLICY

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**Applies to:** All pupils, staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors

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## 1. Purpose

Cherry Tree School is committed to providing a calm, safe and supportive environment in which pupils can learn, develop positive relationships and make progress.

Mobile phones and other personal smart devices can create distraction and disruption and can present safeguarding concerns, including inappropriate recording, online bullying, access to inappropriate material and unauthorised communication.

The school therefore operates a **mobile-phone-free environment during the school day**.

This policy has been developed in accordance with current Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance and should be read alongside the schools:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Acceptable Use/ICT Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Disciplinary/Capability procedures, where applicable.

## 2. Legislative and government guidance framework

This policy has regard to and should be read alongside the following government publications and legislation:

- **Department for Education – Mobile phones in schools** (statutory guidance, updated June 2026).
- **Department for Education – Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff.**
- **Department for Education – Keeping children safe in education 2026 (KCSIE).**
- **Department for Education – School and college security guidance.**
- **Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026**, including the statutory requirement for schools in England to have regard to Secretary of State guidance concerning pupils’ use and access to mobile phones and other personal interactive communication devices during school hours.

The DfE’s current statutory guidance states that schools should be **mobile-phone-free environments by default** and that pupils should not have access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including lessons, movement between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))

The guidance also confirms that schools may require pupils to **hand their mobile phone to staff on arrival**, with the phone returned at the end of the school day. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- mobile phones;
- smartphones;
- smart watches with communication capabilities;
- devices capable of sending or receiving messages or notifications through a mobile network;
- devices capable of recording audio or video;
- other personal smart/communication devices identified by the school.

For the purposes of this policy, the term “**mobile phone**” includes these devices unless specifically stated otherwise.

### 4. Our expectations

#### 4.1 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

1. Bring a mobile phone to school only where there is a genuine need for them to have one for their journey to and from school.
2. Ensure that their mobile phone is switched off or appropriately secured before entering the school building.
3. Hand their mobile phone to the designated member of staff on arrival at school, before entering the school building.
4. Not retain a mobile phone, secondary phone, smart device or communication device on their person during the school day unless an agreed exception applies.
5. Not use, access, view, record with or communicate through a personal mobile device during the school day.
6. Not attempt to conceal a mobile phone or other device.
7. Not use another pupil's mobile phone or personal device.
8. Collect their phone at the designated time and location at the end of the school day.

The school reserves the right to require pupils to hand in all mobile phones or similar devices in their possession, including where a pupil has already handed in one device.

## 5. Handing in mobile phones

Pupils must hand their mobile phone to the designated member of staff **before entering the school building**.

The school will operate a clear system for:

- receiving phones;
- recording or identifying devices where appropriate;
- securely storing devices during the school day;
- returning devices at the end of the school day.

Pupils must not access their phone after handing it in.

The school will take reasonable steps to secure handed-in devices. However, pupils and parents/carers should understand that mobile phones are brought onto school premises at the owner's risk and pupils should not bring unnecessarily valuable items to school.

Where appropriate, the school may introduce additional security arrangements for the storage and collection of devices.

## 6. Refusal to hand in a mobile phone

A pupil who refuses to hand in their mobile phone when requested will be considered to be **refusing a reasonable school instruction and breaching this policy**.

The following response will normally apply:

### First refusal

The pupil will be given a clear reminder of the expectation and an opportunity to comply.

### Continued refusal

The matter will be escalated in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

### Persistent or significant refusal

The school will contact the pupil's parent/carer and require the parent/carer to **attend school and collect the pupil**, where appropriate and in accordance with the school's behaviour procedures.

The pupil will remain supervised by the school until they are collected.

A refusal to comply with the mobile phone procedure may result in an appropriate behaviour sanction.

The school's response will take account of the pupil's individual circumstances, including age, SEND, additional needs, vulnerability and any relevant safeguarding considerations.

## **7. Mobile phone misuse**

The following will constitute a breach of this policy:

- using a mobile phone during the school day;
- refusing to hand in a mobile phone;
- having a concealed mobile phone;
- possessing a second or additional mobile phone;
- using another person's phone;
- attempting to retrieve a phone without permission;
- taking photographs or videos without permission;
- recording staff or pupils without permission;
- making or receiving calls;
- sending or receiving messages;
- accessing social media;
- using a phone to access the internet;
- using a phone to bully, intimidate, threaten or harass another person;
- using a phone to share inappropriate, offensive or harmful material;
- deliberately attempting to circumvent the school's mobile phone procedures.

The school may confiscate a mobile phone or other personal device where the school's behaviour policy has been breached.

The DfE confirms that schools can use confiscation as a disciplinary penalty where a school's policy has been clearly breached, and that headteachers have discretion over the proportionate length of confiscation. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))

## **8. Safeguarding concerns**

Where mobile phone misuse raises a safeguarding concern, staff must follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

This may include concerns relating to:

- child-on-child abuse;
- bullying or harassment;

- sexual harassment or sexual abuse;
- inappropriate or illegal images;
- exploitation;
- threats or intimidation;
- online safety;
- self-harm or suicidal content;
- contact with unsafe individuals;
- extremist or harmful content;
- suspected criminal activity.

Staff should report safeguarding concerns to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** or **Deputy DSL** in accordance with school procedures.

The DfE's mobile phone guidance specifically states that schools should consider whether mobile phone-related misbehaviour may indicate that a pupil is suffering or may be at risk of harm and, where appropriate, follow safeguarding procedures. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mobile-phones-in-schools))

## 9. Searching and confiscation

Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil is in possession of a mobile phone or other prohibited device, the school may use its powers of searching and confiscation in accordance with:

- the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy;
- the Behaviour Policy;
- relevant DfE guidance.

Staff must follow the school's established procedures and should not conduct searches outside their authority.

## 10. Exceptions for pupils

The school recognises that there may be legitimate circumstances where a pupil needs access to a mobile phone or similar device.

Exceptions may be authorised where necessary because of:

- a medical condition;
- a disability or SEND;
- an agreed reasonable adjustment;
- safeguarding circumstances;

- specific educational purposes authorised by the school;
- another exceptional circumstance agreed by the Headteacher or an appropriate senior member of staff.

Any agreed exception should be **specific, documented and communicated to relevant staff**.

Where a pupil has an individual healthcare plan, SEND plan, risk assessment or other agreed support plan that requires access to a device, this will take precedence over the standard procedure to the extent necessary.

The DfE guidance requires schools to consider reasonable adjustments and individual circumstances, including SEND, when implementing their mobile phone policy. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))

## 11. Contact between pupils and parents/carers

Parents/carers should not normally contact pupils directly via their mobile phone during the school day.

If a parent/carer needs to contact their child urgently, they should contact the **school office**.

Similarly, if a pupil needs to contact their parent/carer during the school day, they should speak to a member of staff or the school office.

The school will facilitate appropriate communication where there is a genuine need.

## 12. Staff use of personal mobile phones

Staff are expected to model the standards of behaviour expected of pupils.

Staff must **not use personal mobile phones or personal smart devices on the school site during the school day**, except:

- in designated staff-only areas;
- during designated breaks;
- during lunch periods;
- where specifically authorised by a member of the senior leadership team;
- in an emergency;
- where required for an agreed medical reason;
- where use is necessary for a legitimate work-related purpose and has been authorised by the school.

Staff should not use personal mobile phones:

- in classrooms;

- in corridors;
- in communal pupil areas;
- during lessons;
- during assemblies;
- during pupil transitions;
- whilst supervising pupils;
- whilst on duty;
- in meetings involving pupils;
- in front of pupils unless there is a legitimate and authorised reason.

This includes checking personal messages, social media, emails, notifications or other personal content.

The DfE specifically states that staff should not use their own mobile phones for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. It also recognises that there may be appropriate occasions for staff to use a mobile phone for legitimate purposes, such as issuing homework, rewards or sanctions or using multi-factor authentication. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))

### 13. Staff use of personal devices for work

Where staff require technology for work purposes, they should use **school-provided equipment wherever possible**.

Personal mobile phones should not normally be used to:

- photograph or video pupils;
- record pupil information;
- store pupil information;
- communicate with pupils;
- communicate with parents/carers;
- access confidential school information;
- store safeguarding information.

Any authorised use of personal devices for school purposes must comply with the school's data protection, safeguarding and acceptable-use requirements.

Staff must never use personal messaging or social media accounts to communicate with pupils.

## **14. Emergencies**

Nothing in this policy prevents a member of staff from using a personal mobile phone where there is an immediate emergency or where doing so is necessary to protect the safety or welfare of a pupil, member of staff or other person.

Following an emergency, the staff member should notify an appropriate member of the school's senior leadership team as soon as reasonably practicable.

## **15. Visitors, volunteers and contractors**

Visitors, volunteers and contractors are expected to respect the school's mobile phone expectations.

Personal mobile phones should not be used in pupil areas except where there is a legitimate reason and appropriate permission.

Visitors should not:

- photograph or record pupils;
- record staff;
- share images of pupils;
- communicate with pupils using personal devices.

Where a visitor needs to use a mobile phone for legitimate reasons, they should do so in an appropriate area and away from pupils wherever practicable.

## **16. Parents and carers**

Parents/carers are asked to support the school's mobile-phone-free environment by:

- ensuring their child understands the policy;
- ensuring their child hands in their phone on arrival;
- not encouraging their child to retain or conceal a phone;
- contacting the school office rather than contacting their child directly during the school day;
- supporting the school if their child refuses to comply with the policy.

The school will communicate the policy clearly to parents/carers and pupils.

The DfE states that effective implementation depends on staff, pupils and parents understanding the school's expectations, implementation arrangements and sanctions.  
([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk))

## **17. Equality, SEND and reasonable adjustments**

The school will apply this policy consistently while recognising that some pupils may require reasonable adjustments.

Before applying a sanction, staff should consider whether there are relevant:

- SEND needs;
- communication needs;
- medical needs;
- safeguarding considerations;
- individual risk factors;
- reasonable adjustments;
- support plans.

Reasonable adjustments should not undermine the overall aim of maintaining a mobile-phone-free environment.

Where an exception is necessary, it should be clearly defined so that the pupil, staff and parents/carers understand:

- why the exception is required;
- when the device may be accessed;
- where it may be accessed;
- who may authorise access;
- what restrictions apply.

## **18. Storage and security**

The school will establish a secure system for the storage of pupil mobile phones.

Only authorised staff should have access to stored devices.

The school will take reasonable precautions to prevent:

- loss;
- theft;
- unauthorised access;
- damage.

Pupils should not bring unnecessary valuables to school.

The precise arrangements for storage and collection will be communicated to pupils and parents/carers.

## **19. End-of-day collection**

Pupils may collect their mobile phones at the designated time and location at the end of the school day.

Phones must not be accessed until the pupil has left the school building or reached the location designated by the school.

If a pupil has breached this policy, the school may retain the device for a proportionate period in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and applicable DfE guidance.

Parents/carers may be required to collect a device where this forms part of the school's agreed sanctions.

## **20. Repeated breaches**

Repeated breaches may result in progressively more serious consequences in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

These may include:

- detention or other appropriate sanctions;
- parent/carer meeting;
- parent/carer collection of the device;
- parent/carer collection of the pupil where refusal to comply is persistent;
- an individual behaviour or support plan;
- additional pastoral intervention;
- other sanctions permitted under the school's Behaviour Policy.

Any sanction must be proportionate and take account of the individual circumstances of the pupil.

## **21. Staff non-compliance**

Failure by a member of staff to comply with this policy may be addressed through the school's normal management, supervision or disciplinary procedures.

The school recognises that staff must be able to access personal devices where necessary for legitimate reasons, including emergencies and agreed medical needs.

## 22. Communication and implementation

The school will ensure that this policy is communicated to:

- pupils;
- parents/carers;
- teaching staff;
- support staff;
- governors/proprietors/trustees;
- volunteers;
- contractors and regular visitors.

The expectations will be reinforced through:

- induction;
- assemblies;
- tutor time;
- staff briefings;
- parent/carers communications;
- the school website;
- the Behaviour Policy;
- pupil information and signage.

The school will seek to ensure that the policy is applied **consistently, fairly and predictably**.

## 23. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will monitor implementation of this policy.

The school will review:

- incidents of non-compliance;
- pupil and parent feedback;
- staff feedback;
- safeguarding concerns;
- the effectiveness of the collection and storage arrangements;
- any equality or SEND issues;
- relevant changes to legislation or government guidance.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or sooner where there is a significant change to government guidance or legislation.

## **24. Key government references**

### **Department for Education – Mobile phones in schools**

Statutory guidance, updated 29 June 2026. The guidance states that schools should be mobile-phone-free environments by default and confirms that schools can require pupils to hand phones to staff on arrival. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mobile-phones-in-schools))

### **Department for Education – Behaviour in schools**

Guidance supporting schools in establishing calm, safe and supportive environments and setting appropriate behaviour expectations and sanctions. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/behaviour-in-schools))

### **Department for Education – Keeping children safe in education 2026**

Statutory safeguarding guidance applying from 1 September 2026. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-children-safe-in-education))

### **Department for Education – School and college security guidance**

Guidance concerning the safety and security of pupils and staff. ([GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-and-college-security))

### **Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026**

Provides a statutory requirement for schools in England to have regard to Secretary of State guidance concerning pupils’ use and access to mobile phones and other personal interactive communication devices during school hours. ([Legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2026/12/section-1))

## **Appendix 1 – Quick-reference expectations**

### **PUPILS**

#### **Before entering the building:**

- Switch off/secure your phone.
- Hand your phone to the designated member of staff.
- Do not keep a second phone or smart communication device.

#### **During the school day:**

- No personal mobile phone use.
- No accessing phones.
- No recording.
- No messaging or social media.
- No attempting to retrieve a stored phone.

#### **If you refuse to hand in your phone:**

- This is a breach of the Behaviour Policy.
- Parents/carers may be contacted.
- Parents/carers may be required to collect you from school.

## **STAFF**

### **Personal phones should be:**

- kept away from pupils;
- not used in pupil areas;
- not used during lessons or pupil supervision;
- used only in staff-only areas and during breaks/lunch, unless an authorised exception applies.

### **Remember:**

**Model the behaviour you expect from pupils.**